



City Connection

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All photos submitted by Shana Cross, Sam Houston Statue Gift Shop manager

Sam Houston Statue Gift Shop open and ready for spring

The Sam Houston Statue Gift Shop is fully stocked and ready for the spring season, and both Huntsville residents and out-of-town visitors alike are sure to find all kinds of gifts and items to fit any budget.

According to Shana Cross, Gift Shop manager, the shop holds hundreds of items for both children and adults, including special Texas memorabilia and accessories.

"When you come into the Sam Houston Statue Gift Shop, you're going to be able to find a gift for anyone at a price to fit any budget," Cross said. "We have Texas T-shirts, mugs, key chains, books for both children and adults, gift items like jewelry and purses, as well as Sam Houston and Huntsville-related items.

"We also have the work of local artists and authors, like Jane Monday and Jim Willett. There's something for everyone at the Sam Houston Statue Gift Shop, and that definitely includes local residents."

Cross said the Gift Shop sees visitors from all over the state, the country and the world, as it is co-located with the Sam Houston Statue Visitor Center.

"You never know who's going to drop by the shop," Cross said. "We get adults and seniors from precinct busses out of Harris County, visitors from all over the world, both home-school and public school groups, and statewide church groups.

"We also have local residents here quite often, and we really want to let Huntsville know that the Gift Shop is a great place to look for that special, unique gift you've been searching for."

The Visitor Center and Gift Shop are open seven days a week. From Monday through Friday, the Gift Shop is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday, the shop remains open until 5 p.m. but opens at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., respectively.

For more information, contact Cross at (936) 291-9726 or just come by for a visit at 7600 Hwy 75 South.



City of Huntsville Main Street Program welcomes new coordinator

New program coordinator planning several upcoming events

As of February 15, the City of Huntsville Main Street Coordinator position was filled by a new face - 23-year-old Huntsville resident Kim McAuliffe.

McAuliffe, who joined the City in June 2009 as an administrative assistant at the Wynne Home, has already become acclimated to the position and is excited about the months to come.

"So far, so good," McAuliffe said March 1. "I've tried to get out there and meet the downtown merchants, and we've also got a lot of events coming up in the next few months."

According to McAuliffe, the Main Street Program - which is currently staffed by McAuliffe and one intern - is expecting a busy spring and an eventful summer, including at least three major events.

"The first major event we've got coming up is our Spring Clean, which will be held on April 24," she said. "That's the event when we get various volunteer groups organized to clean up and beautify the downtown area."

"Then, the very next weekend on May 1, we'll have the Airing of the Quilts. That will be followed by the Summer Film Festival, which will be held on July 24-25. This is definitely an exciting time for Main Street."

McAuliffe said another major facet of the Main Street Coordinator position has been sitting on the program's various committees, all of which are concerned with the well-being of the downtown area.

"We have a Promotions Committee, a Cabin on the Square Committee, an Economic Development Committee and an Infrastructure and Design Committee, as well as the Main Street Advisory Board," she said. "As Main Street Coordinator, I sit on each committee and keep a record of their discussions and actions, and on each committee, I work with both downtown merchants and other volunteers from throughout the community."

"I really like working with the different committees that are a part of the Main Street Program."

Having lived in a larger city before coming to Huntsville to attend Sam Houston State University, McAuliffe says she would like to find ways to do more events and improve the look and feel of downtown.

"I'd like to find grant money and other funding to do more events downtown, and I'd also like to help improve the look of downtown, revamp the downtown parks, and maybe even look at parking concerns in the area," she said. "I know that's a lot, but I want to hear everyone's input on what they would like the downtown's focus, and the focus of Main Street, to be."

Although she has only been on the job for a short time, McAuliffe said she has enjoyed the position and looks forward to finding new ways to improve the downtown area.

"I think this job is a good fit for me," she said. "I feel like it combines the things I'm good at, like managing events, staying organized and working with a lot of different people."

United States[®] Census 2010

Important information for citizens

Now is the time to watch for your U.S. Census form for 2010, and it is so important to fill out the census form and return it promptly.

According to 2010.Census.gov, the 2010 Census form is just 10 questions related to:

- Name
- Sex
- Age/Date of birth
- Hispanic origin/Race
- Household relationship
- If you own or rent

There are several important dates to keep in mind during the 2010 Census process.

March 2010 is the time Census forms are mailed or delivered to households. This is the time to watch your mailbox for the paper form, and to complete it as soon as possible.

April 1, 2010 is National Census Day, and the date may be used as a point of reference for sending your completed forms back to the Census Bureau in the mail.

Beginning in April and through the end of July, Census takers will visit households that did not return their Census form by mail.

Statistics from 2010.Census.gov indicate that Texans, on the whole, participated at a 67 percent completion level during the 2000 Census.

More specifically, only 56 percent of Huntsville residents and 54 percent of Walker County residents completed their Census forms that year.

Let's do everything we can to raise those numbers in 2010. This year's Census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for things like hospitals, schools, emergency services, senior centers, public works projects and job training centers. The data will also help determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

City now accepting applications for HOME Program

The City of Huntsville is currently accepting applications for the Home Owner-Occupied Housing Assistance program.

The HOME Program will provide more than \$500,000 in funding to eligible homeowners to rehabilitate or reconstruct their existing homes.

According to Dr. Sherry McKibben, Community Development Specialist with the City, funding will be distributed first among applicants determined to have the highest need by the Huntsville Housing Advisory Committee.

"Because of limited funding for the HOME Program, applicants who have the highest need will be assisted first," McKibben said. "Homeowners considered disabled or elderly, those who have young children, or those who live in sub-standard housing will receive priority assistance."

"Applicants' annual gross income must also be below 50 percent of the area median income determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and we can help residents determine if they are in that range or not."

Applications for HOME Program assistance are currently being accepted, and applicants may complete and submit their applications through March 31.

"Various support documentation is required to apply for HOME Program assistance, and we can provide any help necessary in clarifying what those documents are and preparing them properly," McKibben said. "Unfortunately, if you are unable to provide required documentation, you will not be considered eligible for assistance."

Support documentation required with the HOME Program application includes: (1) Proof of residence, which may include a driver's license, utility bill or other document which includes the applicant's name and physical address; (2) Proof of age, which may include a birth certificate or proof of Social Security benefits such as a current award letter; (3) Proof of disability, which would include a signed physician's statement if the applicant is not receiving SSI due to disability; (4) Proof of assets,

including a copy of the most current bank statements for the applicant's checking and savings accounts, CDs, stocks, bonds, and life insurance policies; (5) Tax certificate, which shows the applicants' taxes have been paid; and (6) Proof of ownership, which would most commonly come in the form of a fee simple title, while forms including a Contract for Deed, Contract for Sale or Quit Claim Deed would not be acceptable.

Proof of income is also required for all household members, and this may include any of the following: Current Social Security or SSI award letter, annuities, insurance, retirement funds, pension, death benefits, two months of current pay check stubs, unemployment or disability payments, public assistance other than food stamps, alimony, TANF, child support, gifts or regular family contributions, business income, sales from self-employed business such as Avon or Mary Kay, income from real estate or rental property, interest or dividends from assets or any other source of income.

After March 31, once applications have been received, McKibben's office will work to assess the applications.

"Once our office determines that an applicant is qualified, I and my assistant will visit the home sites to interview each homeowner, document their needs and take photos," McKibben said. "Based on our assessments, the Huntsville Housing Advisory Committee will create a priority list of applicants."

"The list will be prepared at the discretion of the committee, and their decisions will be final. However, a waiting list of additional applicants will be maintained in the event of future funding."

Please note that the HOME Program is voluntary, and no relocation funding will be provided and applicants will be required to arrange for temporary housing. Applicants who receive funding will be required to remove items from their homes that they do not want demolished.

For more information or for assistance completing a HOME Program application, contact Charlotte Meadows or Steve Kohn, Assistant Community Development Specialists, at (936) 291-5442 or McKibben at (936) 291-5428.

Need Weatherization?

Any and all Walker County residents who are in need of weatherization for their homes are urged to visit the City of Huntsville for funding applications.

According to Dr. Sherry McKibben, Community Development Specialist with the City, funds have been allocated for Huntsville and Walker County through the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, and residents who meet the qualifications for weatherization assistance may apply for the funding through City Hall.

"The goal of weatherization is to reduce energy costs for low-income families, particularly the elderly, people with disabilities, and children, through the installation of energy-efficient measures," McKibben said. "Funding for the weatherization of homes is available to both owner-occupied or renter-occupied homes, and both

single-family and multiple-family homes."

McKibben said the funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, but priority will be given to five key groups of residents.

"Priority is to be given to elderly, disabled and families with children of 5 and younger, households with high energy burden, and households with high energy consumption," McKibben said. "Income limits do apply for program participation."

For more information, contact Charlotte Meadows or Steve Kohn, Assistant Community Development Specialists, at (936) 291-5442 or McKibben at (936) 291-5428. Residents may also visit <http://www.bvcaa.org> to apply for funding or learn more about weatherization.

UPDATE - Recycling Pilot at Elkins Lake

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the citizens, the first 4 recycling collections totaled 32.83 tons (65,660 pounds). The average participation rate is at 61%, this is fantastic. The more citizens get involved in the endeavor to divert as many usable materials from the landfill, the closer we get to a cleaner earth.



Each Elkins Lake residence will receive a survey mid April. The survey will cover several areas of the Pilot Program and is designed to get as much feedback from the citizens as possible. We strongly recommend everyone complete the survey and mail it back in the postage paid envelope provided. Please remember that your recycling days are the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. There is no garbage pickup on Thursdays during the Pilot Program. To prevent spillage when recycling plastic bags, place all plastic bags into one bag and then tie it shut. These bags must have either a #2 or #4 recycling number and symbol printed on the bag. We encourage you to recycle as much as possible. If there are items that you are unsure of or that are not listed, please feel free to call us at 936-294-5743. For additional Recycling Guidelines please visit our website, www.huntsvilletx.gov and click on Recycling Pilot Program - Elkins Lake. Thank you for recycling and keep up the great work!

Think GREEN - Published Recycling Tidbits

All paper can be recycled: newspapers, catalogs, magazines, office paper, junk mail, envelopes, phone books, paper egg cartons, cereal boxes, tissue boxes, cardboard, toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls.

According to the Houston-Galveston Area Council, most paper can be recycled up to 8 times and recycling paper uses 60% less energy than manufacturing from new material.

Police/Fire Statistics: January 2010

Police:

- ◆ Calls for service: **4615**
- ◆ Accidents investigated: **68**
- ◆ Animal Control complaints investigated: **79**

Fire:

- ◆ Calls for service: **101**
- ◆ Main alarm calls: **23**

Calendar

March 2010

- 3 Yard Waste Trimming Collection - no call in required
- 4 Recycling Pick-up in Elkins Lake
- 9 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1212 Avenue M
- 10 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste Collection — **call in required** (936) 294-5796
- 17 Yard Waste Trimming Collection - no call in required
- 18 Recycling Pick-up in Elkins Lake
- 23 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1212 Avenue M
- 24 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste Collection — **call in required** (936) 294-5796

April 2010

- 1 Recycling Pick-up in Elkins Lake
- 6 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1212 Avenue M
- 7 Yard Waste Trimming Collection - no call in required
- 14 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste Collection — **call in required** (936) 294-5796
- 15 Recycling Pick-up in Elkins Lake
- 20 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1212 Avenue M
- 21 Yard Waste Trimming Collection - no call in required
- 28 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste Collection — **call in required** (936) 294-5796

Please note: All requests for Heavy Trash pick-up must be made no later than noon on Monday, the week of the pick-up.

For Your Information

The City of Huntsville biennial survey is now available online on the City of Huntsville's Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov. From the homepage, scroll down to the City News section, and the link to the survey is below. Please take a moment to share your thoughts with us.

Also, in addition to the City of Huntsville's own Web site, citizens can also go to Facebook or Twitter to keep up with City news.

On Facebook.com, just search "City of Huntsville" and become a fan. Or, follow us on Twitter through <http://twitter.com/HuntsvilleTexas>.